

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-13 AID-05 /085 W

-----191211Z 006651 /14

R 191113Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4386

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

UNCLAS MONROVIA 2626

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, IV, LI

SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY STATE VISIT TO LIBERIA - APRIL 11-16, 1977

1. A SIX-DAY STATE VISIT TO LIBERIA BY PRESIDENT AND MRS. FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY OF THE IVORY COAST CAME TO A CLOSE ON APRIL 16 WITH THE SIGNING OF A JOINT COMMUNIQUE. ACCORDING TO THE GOL NEWS SERVICE, PRESIDENTS TOLBERT AND BOIGNY JOINTLY RECOMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE PURSUIT OF PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO WORLD PROBLEMS THROUGH DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION; WELCOMED THE ENCOURAGING PROGRESS FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI; AND DEPLORED AND CONDEMNED THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA.

2. TOLBERT AND BOIGNY FURTHER REAFFIRMED IN THE COMMUNIQUE THEIR RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF STATES AND CONDEMNED THE USE OF FORCE FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN STATES. THE PRESIDENTS SAID THAT THEY WOULD NEVER ALLOW THEIR RESPECTIVE TERRITORIES TO BE USED AS A TRAINING BASE OR SANCTUARY FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES OR PROPAGANDA AGAINST ANY STATE.

3. THEY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO FURTHERING THE CLOSE RELATIONS

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BETWEEN THE IVORY COAST AND LIBERIA THROUGH CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DAM ON THE CAVALLA RIVER FOR HYDROELECTRIC POWER AND IRRIGATION PROJECTS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NUON RIVER BRIDGE. THE TWO PRESIDENTS REAFFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, THE OAU, AND ECOWAS.

4. THE COMMUNIQUE MARKED THE CONCLUSION OF A SUCCESSFUL, BUT UNDRAMATIC STATE VISIT, WHICH UNDERLINED THE LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN LIBERIA AND THE IVORY COAST. THE GOL WAS THOROUGH IN ITS PREPARATIONS FOR BOIGNY'S VISIT. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WERE DECLARED IN MONTERRADO, BONG, AND NIMBA COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS, THE MILITARY, AND CIVIC GROUPS WERE ORGANIZED TO ENSURE LARGE CROWDS TO GREET THE PRESIDENTS ON THEIR ENTRY INTO MONROVIA AND ON TRIPS TO THE COUNTY SEATS OF GBARNGA, SANNIQUELLIE, AND BENTOL CITY AND TO YEKEPA, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE LARGE LAMCO MINING OPERATIONS. PRESIDENT BOIGNY WAS MADE AN HONORARY LIBERIAN CITIZEN, WAS GOWNED AS A PARAMOUNT CHIEF, AND WAS AWARDED AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BY THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA.

5. THE LIBERIANS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING SISTER-CITY RELATIONS BETWEEN ABIDJAN AND MONROVIA, AND BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS' HOME TOWNS, YAMOUSSOKRO AND BENTOL CITY.

6. IN AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE JOINT HOUSES OF THE LIBERIAN LEGISLATURE, BOIGNY LAUDED THE "ONE PARTY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH EXISTS IN THE IVORY COAST AND LIBERIA." BOIGNY SAID THAT THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF "LIBERATING THE PEOPLE FROM PARLIAMENTARIANISM." TOLBERT'S SPEECHES REPEATED HIS FAMILIAR CALLS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AND STRESSED THE HARMONIOUS RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THE IVORY COAST AND LIBERIA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2765059
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY STATE VISIT TO LIBERIA - APRIL 11-16, 1977
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, IV, LI, (HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, FELIX)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/aae8b4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009